



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

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FB14-030

NOAA Fisheries Seeks Public Comment on a Proposed Rule for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region *Comment Period Ends May 27, 2014*

NOAA Fisheries is seeking public comment on the proposed rule for Regulatory Amendment 14 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Regulatory Amendment 14). The proposed rule published on **April 25, 2014 (79 FR 22936)**, with a comment period ending on **May 27, 2014**.

The proposed rule would:

- Revise the current fishing year for both commercial and recreational sectors of greater amberjack from May 1 through April 30, to March 1 through the end of February.
- Revise the current commercial fishing year for black sea bass from June 1 through May 31, to January 1 through December 31.
- Establish a new commercial trip limit for black sea bass. Black sea bass pots are prohibited from November 1 through April 30. From May 1 to October 31, the trip limit would be 1,000 pounds gutted weight for black sea bass pots. From May 1 to December 31, the trip limit would be 1,000 pounds gutted weight for hook-and-line gear. The hook-and-line gear would be restricted to a trip limit of 300 pounds gutted weight from January 1 to April 30.
- Revise the current recreational fishing year for black sea bass from June 1 through May 31, to April 1 through March 31.
- Revise the black sea bass recreational accountability measure to have NOAA Fisheries announce the length of the recreational season for black sea bass annually in the *Federal Register* prior to the April 1 recreational fishing year start date. The fishing season would start on April 1 and end on the date NOAA Fisheries projects the recreational sector's annual catch limit would be met for that year.

- Revise the commercial trip limit for gag from the current 1,000 pounds gutted weight, to include a trip limit reduction to 500 pounds gutted weight, when 75 percent of the gag commercial quota is reached.
- Modify the recreational accountability measure for vermilion snapper by implementing an in-season closure and an annual catch limit overage adjustment (payback) in the event an overage of the recreational annual catch limit occurs. If recreational landings reach or are projected to reach the recreational annual catch limit, recreational harvest would be prohibited for the remainder of the fishing year. Payback of a recreational annual catch limit overage in the following fishing year would occur if vermilion snapper are determined to be overfished and the total annual catch limit (combined commercial and recreational annual catch limits) is exceeded.

Request for Comments

Comments on the proposed rule must be received no later than **May 27, 2014**, to be considered by NOAA Fisheries. See the Addresses section for information on where and how to submit comments.

Addresses

Electronic or hardcopies of the proposed rule may be obtained from:

- The NOAA Fisheries Web site:
- http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/atl/sg/2014/reg_am14/index.html. The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Web site at <http://www.safmc.net>.

You may submit comments by the following methods:

- **Electronic Submission:** Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal. Go to: www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2013-0052, click the “Comment Now!” icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments.
- **Mail:** Nikhil Mehta
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Sustainable Fisheries Division
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All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on www.regulations.gov without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address, etc.), confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. NOAA Fisheries will accept anonymous comments (enter "N/A" in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous). Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

More Information

For more information on the proposed rule for Regulatory Amendment 14, please follow this link to the [Frequently Asked Questions](#).